

***Great Red Salute to Comrade Prabir Purkayastha, fondly called Prabir Da – The Indomitable Trade Unionist, Fearless and Uncompromising Crusader, Distinguished Intellectual and Academician.***

The Government's most reprehensible attempt to incarcerate him for eight long months in a completely fabricated and concocted case now stands thoroughly exposed and unmasked.

History is replete with examples of scientists, scholars, journalists, intellectuals, and whistle-blowers who dared to challenge powerful interests and paid a heavy personal price for their courage. Their only "crime" was their refusal to remain silent when they perceived danger to the nation, injustice to society, or abuse of authority.

The recent observations of the Delhi High Court in the News Click case are a stark reminder of this reality. The Court did not merely quash the proceedings; it delivered a devastating indictment of the manner in which the case had been pursued and the manner in which Comrade Prabir Purkayastha had been falsely implicated.

The observations of Justice N. Krishnan are both startling and deeply disturbing. His remark that, apart from bald assertions and sweeping allegations of conspiracy, there was "not a whisper of any incriminating allegation" capable of remotely establishing the offences alleged, should send shivers down the spine of every right-thinking citizen.

Observations of Justice Neena Bansal are more shocking - Even if all the allegations in the FIR were accepted in their entirety, the essential ingredients of offences under sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) of IPC were not made out.

It is highly outrageous, contemptuous, and condemnable that an individual of such stature was subjected to prolonged incarceration when the Hon'ble High Court itself found the proceedings to be a gross abuse of the process of law. The Court not only quashed the CBI FIR but also struck down the Enforcement Directorate's charge sheet, exposing the hollowness of the allegations that had been levelled against him.

Beloved Comrade Prabir Da, as we all fondly call him, has always been at the forefront of struggles involving the Telecom, Power, and other strategic sectors of the Indian economy.

For the Telecom sector, he has been nothing short of a messiah. From opposing the National Telecom Policy of 1995 to relentlessly challenging policies detrimental to the public sector till the time of his arrest, he provided invaluable intellectual and organizational support to every major struggle undertaken by telecom employees. His unwavering commitment was always directed towards safeguarding the interests of BSNL and exposing policies that, in his considered view, undermined the nation's strategic interests-irrespective of which political party was in power. He contested issues of policy detrimental to BSNL in TRAI Consultative meetings when Pradip Baijal and Neipebdera Mishra were its Chairpersons, particularly his continuous and sustained opposition towards phasing out of ADC (Access deficit charges) arbitrarily without quantifying, and waiving off Rs 400 crores to Reliance was truly remarkable and extraordinary. He is a ferocious speaker. We used to be with him in those meetings of Consultative committee of TRAI. Sh Guliani Ji, DDG (Regulation) / BSNL used to represent BSNL.

When the National Telecom Policy of 1999, architected by the late Shri Pramod Mahajan, permitted private operators such as Airtel, Reliance, and Hutch to migrate from the fixed licence fee regime to a revenue-sharing model, thereby conferring enormous financial benefits running into lakhs of crores of rupees, Comrade Prabir courageously challenged the policy before the Supreme Court. The case was argued pro bono by the renowned advocate Madam Indira Jaising. Veteran Comrade V.A.N. Namboodiri and I were closely associated with him during that historic legal battle.

Throughout the years, he opposed every policy that he believed threatened the interests of the public sector, whether introduced by the UPA or NDA Governments. He was the bedrock and intellectual architect of numerous movements within BSNL. His grasp of economics, technology, public policy, and political developments is extraordinary. Intellectually, he is simply unparalleled—an ocean of knowledge and wisdom.

It is therefore particularly painful and distressing that he was incarcerated for eight long months. Equally unfortunate is the fact that large sections of the telecom trade union movement failed to register even a token protest against this dastardly and condemnable action. History will judge this silence harshly.

Today, however, Comrade Prabir Purkayastha stands taller than ever before. Vindicated by the judiciary and strengthened by adversity, he remains a beacon of courage and resistance. Future generations in the Telecom and Power sectors would do well to study his contributions and draw inspiration from his unwavering commitment to truth, public service, and national interest.

This case carries profound significance far beyond the fate of one individual. It exposes the grave danger of allowing suspicion, ideology, prejudice, or political convenience to masquerade as evidence. In a constitutional democracy, allegations are not proof. State power is not a substitute for evidence. Investigative agencies, however powerful, remain bound by the rule of law and constitutional safeguards.

Yet, before truth ultimately prevailed, an individual had already suffered. Months of incarceration, relentless scrutiny, damage to reputation, emotional trauma, and the anguish inflicted upon family members can never be fully compensated. Even when justice finally arrives, it often arrives after punishment has already been endured.

This case serves as a powerful reminder that the process itself can become a weapon when wielded recklessly. The Court's characterization of the proceedings as a "gross abuse of the process of law" should compel every citizen to reflect upon the importance of safeguarding civil liberties, constitutional freedoms, and the sanctity of due process.

***The Delhi High Court's judgment stands as a beacon of hope. It reaffirms that the Constitution remains the ultimate guardian of liberty and that the judiciary continues to serve as a bulwark against arbitrary exercise of power. It reminds us that while courage may invite persecution, it also inspires generations.***

***Let this be a tribute not only to Comrade Prabir Purkayastha but also to every scientist, journalist, thinker, trade unionist, and citizen who has suffered for speaking truth to power. Their struggles remind us that freedom is preserved not by silence but by courage; not by submission but by conviction; and not by the might of authority but by the triumph of truth.***

Truth may be imprisoned. Truth may be vilified. Truth may be persecuted.

But truth, ultimately and invariably, prevails.

**Red and Tallest Salute, Comrade Prabir Da.**



**G.L. Jogi,  
General Secretary,  
Sanchar Nigam Pensioners' Welfare Association (SNPWA),  
New Delhi.**